Historical Society of Palm Desert

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The Hourglass

Community
Service
Collections
Archives

SUMMER 2009

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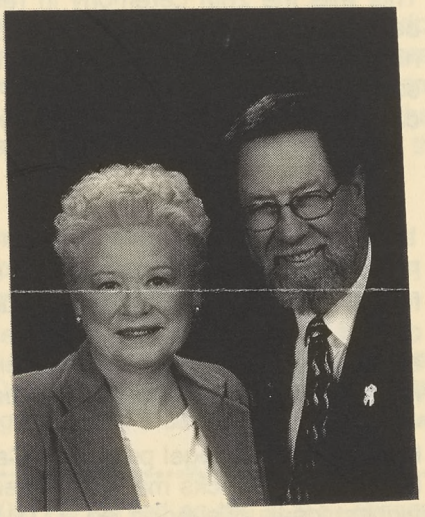
FOUNDER'S DAY 2009
Recipients: Dick & Ginny Folkers



Between the two of them, this couple has wracked up a total of 25 years of volunteering with the Historical Society. Since moving to the desert in 1985 from Sacramento, they have come to understand a sign they saw painted on a trash can when they first arrived "I (a heart) P.D." After having done a fair amount of traveling around the U.S. and seeing a few foreign countries, they can truthfully say that Palm Desert is one of the most beautiful places in the world. After taking many vacation trips, both short and extended, they are always happy to return home.

Richard was born in Mt. Clemens, Michigan on March 20, 1936; the eldest of four siblings. He attended parochial schools, University of Detroit, Tri-State College in Indiana, and Wayne State University for his M.S. in Civil Engineering. From 1954-56 he served in the army as a NIKE Guided Missile Technician. Employers consisted of a county and three cities: Detroit, Sacramento, and Palm Desert until his retirement in 2002. Professional responsibilities, active church membership, and scoutmaster duties in two states have kept him busy. He is an avid reader and a loyal Palm Desert Rotary Club member; but he is the most enthusiastic about target shooting in Cowboy Action matches with the Palm Springs Gun Club.

After joining the ranks of the retired, Dick became a member of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society. Shortly afterward he took on the presidential duties, docent activities, and has been active in all phases of the annual yard sale and other Society events. He is one of those faithful volunteers who can be counted on to fill in the gaps.

Virginia was born in Detroit on March 27, 1936; the eldest of four siblings. She attended parochial and public schools. In 1942 her family moved to a rural area where they raised vegetables, fruit and flowers to be marketed. The Research Division of General Motors Technical Center hired her as a secretary where she worked for five years until marrying. Ginny's activities included: libraries, P.T.A., bazaar chairman, editing church bulletins, guiding bible studies, upholstering and interior design, secretary to Palm Desert Property Owners Association board, and construction assistant to her son during the building of their home on Juniper Street.

The Folkers have three sons who each married and have families in California. Bud (junior) married Marianne and has three daughters and a son (Jennifer, Jacqueline, Aaleyha, and Matt). He manages a rental yard in Sacramento. Chuck married Michelle and has three daughters (Sarah, and twins Emily and Katie). He owns Folkers' Construction and has done many additions and remodels in the Coachella Valley. Dave married Lisa and has two sons (Max and Luis). He has an optometric practice in Sunnyvale.

After joining the Society in 1990 Ginny served as secretary for the board, edited the newsletter, was president for two years, and has been working consistently on the local history archive. Currently she is processing the huge Henderson collection (about 250 hours a month) and she hopes to write a biographical book on the life of Clifford Henderson and his role in the history of Palm Desert.

THE FOUNDER'S DAY CEREMONY
May 16, 2009 - City Hall Council Chamber

This annual event was opened with introductions by Society president, Barbara Keedy Eastes. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by John Marman and Don Graybill gave the invocation. Councilman Richard Kelly did a masterful job of relating the many occurrences in the City during Dick Folkers' employment as Public Works Director from 1985 through 2002. Major accomplishments were noted, and occasional foibles brought laughter to the audience and blushes from Folkers. Son of the recipients and a local resident, Chuck Folkers, gave a thorough run-down on his parent's life and activities. He also brought out a few little-known facts about them. Mayor Bob Spiegel presented a proclamation from the City of Palm Desert. City liaison, Pat Scully, was present to make sure everything ran smoothly.

Last year's recipients of the Founder's Day award, Richard & Janice Oliphant, presented the wooden plaque to the new 2009 award winners. Dick Folkers thanked all who attended, and introduced family and friends. Ginny expressed her appreciation and encouraged those in the audience to add richness to their lives by volunteering for community service. Sweets were set out by Adele Sandman, Kim Housken and her daughter Taylor. Douglas Kopp brought and set up tables. Anne Tuttle and Bev Graybill took care of the registration table.

This was the 28th ceremony in remembrance of the ground-breaking in the barren desert cove which was destined to become the thriving tourist center of Palm Desert. Clifford Henderson dedicated the property he had accumulated, where his dream would become a reality through his persistence and hard work, on May 15, 1946. Yes, the virgin sand had been stirred from its original posture by Patton's military vehicle pool and by the establishment of Palm Village; but this post-war community would be a new and wonderful project. It is a miracle worth remembering!!

CARLOS ORTEGA HONORED
"Citizen of the Decade"

Palm Desert Rotary Club honored Carlos Ortega at a luncheon held at Marriott's Desert Springs Resort on April 8. Many friends and work associates attended to wish well to Carlos who has worked for the City of Palm Desert almost from the date of incorporation. He has served as the City Manager for the past seven years, guiding the government entity through all its activities and retaining solvency along with City Council members. For reasons of health, Carlos has tendered his resignation. An excellent audio/visual presentation was shown which included many of those closest to Carlos.

Mayor Robert Spiegel presented Carlos with a key to the city. Jokingly he said they changed all the locks when Carlos left. Dr. Ward Fredericks made a presentation of the College of the Desert Foundation Exemplar Award, which represents the highest ideals of support to C.O.D. He noted that Carlos served long and continuously, and set a good example for others. In 2007 Carlos was voted "Man About Town", a fund-raising program which gave the Foundation a needed boost. A white fire helmet was the offering of the Fire Department. Pinch-hitting for Roy Wilson, Corky Larson talked about damage done during flooding 32 years ago, and about Carlos' role as Redevelopment Agency Director and Assistant City Manager. Various cities and other government agencies presented proclamations for the occasion.

PALMS TO PINES ROTARY CLUB

On Saturday, May 9, this Wednesday morning club elected to do their community service activity at the Historical Society of Palm Desert. These Rotarians circulated in their bright blue shirts doing much needed repairs and clean-up jobs. They spent all morning and the historic firehouse was much more presentable after they finished. The Board of Directors and membership appreciates this act of kindness. Many thanks to each and every one.

ANNUAL ED MULLINS MEMORIAL PICNIC
Civic Center Park - March 29, 2009

This wonderful gathering of members and guests never ceases to be an enjoyable outing. Warren Eastes and Gary Olesen cooked the traditional burgers, and Barbara Keedy Eastes organized all the trimmings that makes this picnic such a delightful affair. Ginny Mullins and many of her family were there to talk with members and show off the latest additions to the Mullins clan. Bob Mullins was in attendance, and looking for all-the-world like a young version of his father. In recent years he left the University of Jerusalem where he taught for many years, and is now with the University of the Pacific. He married a young woman from Denmark, and now has an active family. He says he is very happy!

NEW MEMBERS

Contributing:	Susan Marie Weber	Family:	Gene & Robbi Grant
	Ken Heichman		Harold & Delores Hanke
			Wagner Family
Individual:	Mike Swank		Dennis & Cathy Butero
	Phyllis Harkins		Don & Kathy Shayler
	Kerstin Leuschner		

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MEMBERS WHO LIVE IN OUR MEMORIES

Florence Cowan-Boyd was born in Redlands on August 4, 1916. She married Ben Cowan in April 1939 in San Bernardino. Shortly following World War II, they moved to the desert where Ben started in business with a used car lot in Palm Springs, later expanding to several Ford franchises in the Coachella Valley. They lived in one of the few houses in Palm Village on the north side of Highway 111, then later built the first house on the south side at Ironwood Street and Burroweed Lane.

Well-known as a gracious hostess, many guests were entertained in their home; but the Shadow Mountain Club was the hub of their social activities. Florence was very active in the Palm Desert Community Church which originally met out-of-doors or in the stable which was located on Portola Avenue. She taught preschool children in the Sunday School. When the congregation outgrew their small facility, these Presbyterians built a beautiful house of worship on Highway 74 and are now the custodians of the "Cross on the Hill."

The ultimate mother of her two daughters, Lenore and Annette, Florence provided them with everything the desert had to offer its younger citizens. There was horseback riding, dance lessons, piano lessons, girl scouts, and opportunities to participate in the church. It was through this church affiliation that she developed many life-long friendships

Florence is preceded in death by her infant son, Benjamin, by her daughter Lenore, and by her husband and high school sweetheart, Willis Boyd. In her later years, she joined the Historical Society of Palm Desert and she earned praise from the Society with her collection of photos, memorabilia, and a clear mind for remembering details of local history. Florence will be remembered as one of the original pioneers of Palm Desert.

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Leon Schovaers was born in 1928 in Spokane, Washington and died here on 1-6-09. He served on the U.S.S. Missouri during his time in the Marines in 1945 and 1946. He studied space engineering technology and worked at Point Magu in the missile projects there. The fathered six children, four of which reside in Salt Lake City. We are indebted to Charlotte, Leon's wife, for providing us with information about his life.

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Randy Riddell, the son of member Evonne Henderson-Riddell, passed away recently. Randy was the grandson of Randall Henderson who published Desert Magazine here in Palm Desert after he built the pueblo-style building on Highway 111 in the late 1940s. Evonne worked for her father at that time, so she is truly one of the earliest pioneers. Our sincere sympathy goes out to her in this time of sorrow.

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ART SHOW & SALE
March 6-14, 2009

This Society event was an unqualified success for the number of visitors who came to the historic firehouse to view the paintings of Carl Bray, Sally Ward and Bill Bender. The walls of many residences here and afar are now graced with gorgeous replicas of smoke trees, by-gone trains, desert terrain and critters, cactus, realistic and stylized people of the past. Oh, how we admire the talents of others...and wish we would take the time to see what creative juices are within ourselves that could be applied to a canvas with a little paint.

Raffle Winner

"Highway 74 Wash" by Carl Bray was won by Craig and Lynn Childress of Yorba Linda. They have been friends of our Past-President, Hal Rover, for the past 25 years. The happy couple came to pick up their painting on March 21.

AMELIA EARHART
"Queen of the Air"

In 1937 Amelia Earhart was piloting a plane in an around the world flight when the plane disappeared. Ms. Earhart was a crusader, an explorer, and as far as the public was concerned she was the most charismatic pilot ever -- they adored her. On July 24, 1897 a little girl was born in Kansas. She was a tomboy, liked to ride ponies, chemistry and sports were her favorite subjects in school. This dare-devil would sled down a hill and zip under a horse. Her parents had an embittered marriage, mostly because the husband was an alcoholic and had a hard time holding a job.

Amelia moved to Southern California in 1920 and learned to fly. She bought her first plane, which she painted yellow and called the "Canary." It was her habit to wear masculine clothes, and she cut her hair short. In 1924 her parents separated and she moved to Boston with her mother. Since aviation was an expensive activity, Amelia generated an income by teaching children in a settlement house,

She attended a meeting in New York regarding the "Friendship Flight" across the Atlantic, but she was not allowed to be the pilot in this historic endeavor. This was when she met George Putnam, a publisher, who would later play an important role in her life. The trans-Atlantic plane took off on June 18, 1928 and landed in Nova Scotia. After 20 hours more in the air, they landed in England. Media in New York advertised her as the first woman to across the Atlantic, but only as a passenger.

A thoroughly modern woman, Amelia was appealing to both men and women. She was a great feminist with a flair for fashion. In 1929 she helped other female fliers in the Powder Puff Derby. Not the best woman flier, because she always got sick from the smell of the gas cans they had to carry along in the planes due to the small size of gas tanks. It was an expensive career, so she was kept busy raising money.

Finally George Putnam divorced his wife and proposed marriage to Amelia, but she turned him down five times. Eventually she agreed to marry with the condition that he would let her go in a year's time if they were not happy. At first it was the union of two workaholics; actually, Amelia competed with herself.

Ready for an overseas flight on May 20, 1932, they took off at 7:15 p.m. in stormy weather. It was cloudy, and she had to deal with ice and snow. Toward the end of the flight she discovered that gas was leaking out and she had to land in Londonderry. New York City sponsored a parade in her honor, and her courage and success gave her self-confidence at the age of 35 years.

By 1934 she was one of the best-known women in the world, and the company she worked with became Trans-World Airlines. She befriended Eleanor Roosevelt, which earned her invitations to stay at the White House. Now she was three years into her marriage and her husband was acting as her agent and promoter. They moved from New York to Southern California, where she hobnobbed with movie stars. However, she was a very private person, who liked to have periods of solitude. Amelia supported her mother and sister financially. In January of 1935 she flew from Hawaii to Oakland, California in 18 hours

Only one more flight was needed to set a new record -- it would be around the world, and should approximate the distance at the equator. The cost would be $80,000 and the flight would start off at Perdue University. Amelia established an elite crew, and had a two-way radio which was never used. On March 17, 1937 they left Oakland and crashed in Honolulu. Repairs on the Electra amounted to $30,000.

Another attempt would be made, with Fred Noonan as the only crew member. They started off from Miami, to South America, India, Australia, New Guinea -- making 10 to 12 hours each day. From there they were able to radio out, but they couldn't receive messages in return. Amelia got to use her celestial navigational skills. Then, **the plane vanished**. Search parties consisting of 65 planes and 9 ships combed the Pacific....their efforts were in vain.

Note: Amelia Earhart was a contemporary of Cliff Henderson in the field of aviation. The above information was taken from a Smithonian Institute A & E Biography.

THE SOCIETY IS COLLECTING INK JETS

When the ink jets for your printer run dry, don't just throw them into the trash. Save them for the Society!! You can drop them off at the historic firehouse. Tell your friends that we have a use for them, so bring as many as you can. The Society will be accepting these donations until May 24 and again beginning on September 28. Thank you for supporting us in this useful way. The museum will be closed during the four hot summer months.

CAN WE CLAIM FRANK BOGERT AS A PALM DESERT PIONEER?

Although Frank Bogert was primarily a Palm Springs celebrity, the whole Coachella Valley might claim him as one of their own. This man lived to be nearly 100 years old -- which puts us in mind of the city's history pictorial which he published titled: "Palm Springs: First Hundred Years." Frank was raised as a cowboy; his father even rode a horse in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. In 1927 he and his partner brought a string of horses to the valley to establish a winter stable here. This was weekend work for him while he attended UCLA during the week and took bit parts in western movies to help with finances. Frank created a dude ranch south of Palm Springs which eventually became Thunderbird Ranch.

If you ever heard Frank Bogert speak at a meeting or social gathering, you know that he said what was on his mind, whether it was acceptable or controversial didn't matter to him. He never tried to polish his honest, straight-forward personality. An excellent story-teller, you would be hard-pressed to distinguish the imaginative from the factual. A character in the truest sense of the word, he will be sorely missed by people who knew him best and remembered by everyone.

BOARD MEETINGS SUMMARY

From notes by Dick Folkers, Past-President

- The untimely death of Bob Green brought up the question of the status of the fire memorabilia and the chamber pots. Everything will remain as is for the time being.

- Harry Quinn gave a wonderful presentation on the Pre-History of Coachella Valley and the Martinez Rock Slide on April 24 at the Portola Community Center.

- Hal Rover represented the Society at the Plein Air Painting Exhibit on Friday, May 8 at the Visitors Center. Hal will also be working with the Coachella Valley Watercolor Society about a future art show at the Historical Society Museum.

- President Barbara Eastes has found a source for new/replacement shirts, aprons, caps, mugs, etc.
- A new card is being developed for use in getting more information out on the Historical Society.

- The museum will close on May 24 and will reopen on September 28. Call 346-6588 for access during the summer.

- Clean-up and maintenance at the historic firehouse will begin on Thursday, June 11, at 9:30 a.m. Please call Anne at the office if you can help us with this project. Thanks.

- The B. J. Callahan Essay Contest for Washington School will be delayed until the Spring of 2011.

- Our first Summer Spectacular Event will be held in late June. It will be chaired by Kim Housken and Madonna Marman. You will receive details about time and place soon.

- The Fall Luncheon theme will be "Vintage." Attendees may wear vintage costumes or clothing. It will be a truly memorable event. Marcy Gregory will chair this event.

- Book Sales are going good. If you want to provide a gift for family members or friends who have everything, please consider buying a copy of "Images of America - Palm Desert" for them.

VOLUNTEER DINNER

John Marman: Volunteer of the Year

The City of Palm Desert sponsored their annual dinner for volunteers on Saturday, April 25. Desert Willow Country Club served an excellent meal. For his multiple volunteer projects, John Marman was given the "Volunteer of the Year" award. His activities include: the Sister City committee, a trustee for the College of the Desert Foundation, and the county Date Festival board. John is on the Society's Board of Directors, and he and his wife Madonna chair the Mini-Muster fire safety program for local third graders each October. We are proud to have the Volunteer of the Year involved with the Historical Society. Each volunteer who attended the dinner received a copy of the Palm Desert book.

FALL YARD SALE

Donations for this annual fund-raiser will be taken during the summer months while the museum is closed. If you need to have your donation of good, saleable items picked up, you can call the Society at 346-6588 and leave a message. The phone will be monitored to receive these requests. This year we would like to have: furniture, household appliances, lamps, sporting goods, tools, toys, and gently used clothing and shoes; but no mattresses or bed pillows.

MEMBERSHIP

As you are well aware, the national economy is hurting right now, and so it is also with the Historical Society of Palm Desert. Our budget needs a boost and so one of the solutions is to have people join us by buying a membership. Encourage your family and friends to support us in this helpful way (or) give a membership as a gift ... one size fits all. Through our quarterly newsletter they will be reminded of your generosity all year long.

Individual	$ 25.00	Business	$ 75.00
Family	$ 30.00	Bronze	$ 1000.00
Supporting	$ 50.00	Silver	$ 2500.00
Contributing	$ 100.00	Gold	$ 5000.00

SCHEDULE OF UP-COMING EVENTS

May 24, Sat.	Museum closes for the summer.
Summer	Society's first Summer Spectacular (time & place to be announced)
Sept. 28, Mon.	Museum reopens after being closed for the summer months.
Oct. 21, Wed.	Annual Fall Luncheon, theme "Vintage" - (location & speaker to be announced) - see item in Board Meeting summary
Oct. 25, Sun.	Golf Cart Parade (theme to be announced)
Nov. 14 & 15 Sat. & Sun. (tentative)	Fall Yard Sale

Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day --- Museum will be closed
Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve -- Museum will close at 12:00 p.m.

Note: The next issue of the "Hourglass" newsletter will be published in September 2009. If you have any suggestions for future issues, please leave a message on the Society phone. Have a restful summer.

- Ginny Folkers, Editor

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